

Neurodiversity Book List

Picture Books:

Title: *On a Beam of Light: A Story of Albert Einstein*

Author: Jennifer Berne

Synopsis: This tells the story of Albert Einstein's life and how being different can be good. It mentions that he did not talk much until after the age of three. It also talks about some of his quirks like his dislike for wearing socks and his ability to create pictures and experiments in his head.

Related Topics: Autism, being different, having trouble in school

Grade Level: K-5

Title: *The Girl Who Thought in Pictures: The Story of Dr. Temple Grandin*

Author: Julia Finley Mosca

Synopsis: This book talks about the life and inventions of Temple Grandin, a prominent animal scientist and autism spokesperson. She herself was diagnosed with autism, and uses her uniqueness to succeed in her work.

Related Topics: Autism, bullying

Grade Level: 2-8

Title: *We All Have Different Abilities*

Author: Melissa Higgins

Synopsis: The words and pictures of this book emphasize that although we may be different, everyone is able to do different things. It would be a good book for normalizing that people who are different than us are still capable of many things.

Related Topics: Visible and invisible disabilities, treating people who are different with kindness

Grade Level: PreK-2

Title: *Your Fantastic Elastic Brain: Stretch It, Shape It*

Author: JoAnn Deak Ph.D.

Synopsis: This book teaches what our brain is, what it is capable of, and how we can become smarter. It could be used to help students understand what part of the brain is growing or changing when we learn.

Related Topics: Neuroscience, biology, psychology

Grade Level: 4-8

Title: *It's Okay to Be Different*

Author: Todd Parr

Synopsis: This goofy book has lots of silly pages in addition to more meaningful ones. Each page starts with "It's okay to..." and then has a trait that is okay for a child to have.

Related Topics: Disability acceptance, Racial differences (implied), Different families (parents who don't look like you, adoption)

Grade Level: Pre-K-2

Title: *My Wandering Dreaming Mind*

Author: Merriam Sarcia Saunders, LMFT

Synopsis: Sadie, a girl with ADHD, has a very imaginative mind, but has trouble focusing sometimes. Her parents talk to her about what positive traits she has, and help her understand that her disability does not make her any less valuable.

Related Topics: ADHD, Disability acceptance

Grade Level: K-4

Title: *Why Johnny Doesn't Flap*

Author: Clay and Gail Morton

Synopsis: This book is written from the point of view of an autistic child. He describes Johnny, his neurotypical friend, who does some strange things from his point of view. The book offers a unique perspective which shows that "normal" is in the eye of the beholder.

Related Topics: Autism, Friendships with people with/without disabilities

Grade Level: 1-6

Title: *The Boy with Big, Big Feelings*

Author: Britney Winn Lee

Synopsis: This book tells the story of one little boy with some big, big emotions and how he learns to see them for the gifts they are. At the beginning of the book, he tries to hide his emotions. By the end of the story he realizes that everyone has big emotions sometimes, and sharing them with others can help him handle his feelings.

Related Topics: Emotional regulation, Relating to others, Empathy

Grade Level: PreK-4

Title: *Benny Doesn't Like to Be Hugged*

Author: Zetta Elliott

Synopsis: Benny is an autistic black boy who is described by his friend. They list differences about him, and why it is great to be his friend. The background illustrations are filled with people of different races and abilities.

Related Topics: Autism (example of a black autistic boy), Acceptance of disabilities

Grade Level: PreK-2

Title: *Meesha Makes Friends*

Author: Tom Percival (He also writes many other social-emotional books.)

Synopsis: Meesha is a girl who loves to make things. She even crafts her own friends, because she finds it hard to know how to make friends with other children. In the end, she finds that the easiest way for her to make friends is to share her love of art with other kids. This book focuses on celebrating strengths and interests and making friends by being yourself.

Related Topics: Social skills, neurodiversity, celebrating differences, positive self-esteem

Grade Level: PreK-2

Title: *The Boy Who Loved Math: The Improbable Life of Paul Erdős*

Author: Deborah Heiligman

Synopsis: This biographical picture book is about the life of Paul Erdős, a famous mathematician. He had a lot of qualities in common with people on the autism spectrum. His whole life was centered around his preoccupation with math, and he lived a very unconventional life. He struggled with daily tasks and did not ever own a house or have a family of his own. Despite this, his love of math brought him immense joy, and he did not seem to miss having a more traditional life.

Related Topics: Autism, special interests, success despite challenges

Grade Level: 2-8

Novels:

Title: *Fish in a Tree*

Author: Lynda Mullaly Hunt

Synopsis: A sixth-grade girl, Ally, has been able to trick all of her previous teachers into not realizing that she is unable to read. She assumes that she cannot read because she is dumb. This year, however, her caring

teacher shows her that she is not dumb at all and has the capability to learn to read after all.

Related Topics: Dyslexia, Reading disabilities

Grade Level: 5-8

Title: *Rules*

Author: Cynthia Lord

Synopsis: This book is about a twelve year old girl, Catherine, who has a little brother with autism. She talks about how difficult it can be having a family member with a disability. Then, she meets someone who changes her perspective on having a disability and what is "normal".

Related Topics: Autism, Non-speaking disabilities, Accepting differences, Family members with disabilities

Grade Level: 5-8

Title: *Because of the Rabbit*

Author: Cynthia Lord

Synopsis: A girl named Emma has been homeschooled until the beginning of her fifth grade year. She wants desperately to fit in, however she ends up being paired with a student named Jack for a project and he stands out because he is obsessed with animals and doesn't understand it is appropriate for him to start talking about the things he loves. Emma has to decide if she wants to risk being friends with him if it means she might stand out.

Related Topics: Autism, Being friends with those with disabilities, homeschool transition

Grade Level: 4-6

Title: *Out of My Mind*

Author: Sharon M. Draper

Synopsis: A girl with cerebral palsy is unable to speak and everyone believes that she is intellectually disabled because of her lack of control over her body. When she receives a talking device and is able to express herself, everyone learns that she is actually highly intelligent and she even tries out for her school quiz bowl team.

Related Topics: Cerebral Palsy, Non-speaking disabilities, Judging based on appearance

Grade Level: 3-8